Amendment to Payment of Wages Act

1522. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are proposing to amend the Payment of Wages Act to enable Government to enhance the wage ceiling on the basis of the consumer price index;

(b) if so, the details of the proposed amendment;

(c) whether any consultations have been made with the trade unions in this regard; and

(d) if so, the outcome of the consultations?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI K. CHANDRA SEKHAR RAO): (a) to (d) The Rajya Sabha has passed the Payment of Wages (Amendment) Bill, 2004 which mainly provides for increasing the wage ceiling from the existing level of Rs. 1600/- to Rs. 6500/- per month, its further enhancement on the basis of quinquennial Consumer Expenditure Survey of NSSO through notification and increase in penalties, which had also been discussed with all stakeholders.

VRS in Bharat Gold Mines Limited

1523. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the number of workers in Bharat Gold Mines Limited, KGF are yet to cover under Voluntary Retirement Scheme;

(b) whether Government have agreed to introduce a new VRS for these remaining workers of BGML;

(c) if so, what would be the cost involved; and

(d) by when, the above new VRS be introduced?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (DR. DASARI NARAYAN RAO): (a) There are 3100 employees in Bharat Gold Mines Limited (BGML) who may opt for Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) as and when it is decided to be opened.

(b) A proposal of Ministry of Mines to introduce a new VRS in BGML has been considered by the Committee of Secretaries on 2.12.2004 and the same will be submitted to the Cabinet for consideration.

(c) After adjusting the *ad-hoc* payments made to the employees from time to time after closure of the company, the estimated expenditure involved in introduction of a new VRS in BGML may vary from Rs. 72.45 crore to Rs. 123.45 crore depending upon the nature of the VRS.

(d) The new VRS will be introduced after the approval of Cabinet is received.

Pollution by SECL Washery

†1524. SHRI RAMADHAR KASHYAP: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a washery set up by S.E.C.L. Ms Aryan Coal Verification Private Ltd. is situated in a densely populated area;

(b) whether Government are aware that this washery is creating a lot of pollution in this area;

(c) whether Government are also aware that asthma and other respiratory ailments are spreading due to pollution in the area; and

(d) if so, the action being taken for protection from the ailments?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (DR. DASARI NARAYAN RAO): (a) The washery has been set up by M/s Aryan Coal Beneficiation Private Limited in South Eastern Coalfields Limited command area. It is not located in a densely populated area.

(b) As reported by Coal India Ltd., there is no such report that the washery is causing heavy pollution in the areas.

(c) There is no evidence that Asthma and other respiratory diseases are spreading in the above area.

(d) Does not arise in view of reply to part (c) above.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.